

**Famous Artists Painting Course**  
Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Section

**9**

**Landscape painting**

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PAUL CÉZANNE  
View of Auvers  
Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago



Cézanne translated the summertime sparkle of *Landscape at Auvers* into a symphonic harmony of color touches. Each area in houses and trees is rendered, not as a single hue, but as a chord of color which includes many notes and half-notes — warm violets and cool blue-greens juxtaposed on slate roof-tops, and red touches in green foliage masses. The forms that make up this richly varied surface are defined by sharply accented edges which alternately appear and disappear, an evidence of Cézanne's concealed but essential framework of draftsmanship.



We must not be satisfied with retaining the beautiful formulas of our illustrious predecessors. Let us go forth to study beautiful nature . . . let us strive to express ourselves according to our personal temperaments.

PAUL CEZANNE

The beautiful is in nature and is encountered under the most diverse forms of reality. Once it is found it belongs to art, or rather to the artist who discovered it.

GUSTAVE COURBET

## The painter's challenge by HAROLD SCHMIDT

The challenge is before you. Accept this challenge. Never has a painter been so free. Never has the opportunity for individual expression been so great.

In nature you can find your own private world. Here are no outlines around things or around space. Here are no preconceived systems of aesthetics, of color or arrangement. Here you can make your own way, paint your own path, set your own goal and strive toward its attainment.

No one before you has even thought and felt what you think and feel — no one, that is, with your knowledge, your emotions, your background and understanding. Everything is happening for the first time. Everything awaits your personal comment.

You have been impressed by the glory of a brittle, cold, high-skied winter's day; the lazy drifting clouds of summer; the true swing of the heavens at night; the opening of a single flower.

When you are enthralled by the beauty of time, space, or thing — you have been moved. What you have felt is yours. The shimmering world of sunlight, splintered there and here into dancing shadows, is not significant in itself; it is rather the impact of this world on *you* that counts. Spirit is always more important than fact.

You desire to tell the world what beauty you have discovered. You clarify your observations, thoughts, and emotions by an organized re-creation of them in graphic form. For where most people see isolated facts and objects, the artist finds harmony — or the opportunity to create harmony.

Your job is to realize and present the qualities that have moved you. When you have learned how to communicate your emotions in paint, so that others feel as you have felt, you have arrived at your goal. You have become an artist.

## Landscape painting

Nature has always been one of the artist's most valuable and inspiring teachers. Her dappled birches, somber pines, and rolling meadows — the strong stone faces of her cliffs, her turbulent waterfalls — her skies now black with angry clouds and now bright blue and smiling — here is a treasure house of images from which the artist can emerge with his imagination enriched and his sketchbook full.

Go to nature often. No matter how creative you may be or how original your landscapes are, in time your ideas will wear thin. The same trees, rocks, and skies, no matter how you recombine them in different pictures, are still the same skies, rocks, and trees. Nature has others in infinite supply. Take them from her and use them to refresh your mind and your pictures.

The imaginative artist never takes nature just as he finds her. Nature is too accidental. Her rich, exciting forms and textures are all around you in the landscape, but they are not organized, they lack an artistic *plan*. If you copy, you copy confusion. Instead, you must create, redesign, and rearrange the scenes that nature offers you. "Art," Emile Zola said, "is nature seen through a temperament." The landscape subject must be filtered through the personality of the artist, who purifies and strengthens it.

Each different mood or aspect of nature *has an emotional association for us*. A sense of vast space and silence broods over the endless reaches of the plains or the desert. On the edge of a vast canyon or at the foot of a towering mountain, man feels the grandeur of nature and his own insignificance. In a dark, stagnant swamp, with the mist rising from the water and the weeping willows drooping all around, the atmosphere is sinister and dismal. By contrast, a trout stream is clear and bubbling, its ripples glitter in the sun — the feeling is one of cheer, a call

to brisk activity, and the stimulating challenge.

You can control the response of your audience by making use of these emotional associations. But keep in mind that you cannot create a convincing illusion of a real scene unless you first put yourself right where you want the audience to stand — unless you yourself feel what you want them to feel.

From this moment, begin to look at landscapes with a sharper awareness. Experience the space of the plains or the hemmed-in feeling of the city when you travel through them. Feel the darkness of the deep woods, the sunlight and sparkle of the trout brook. Analyze your feelings in each place — and, above all, note *what characterizes each locale — what makes it a particular place and no other*. The scene, deeply felt, closely observed, and thoughtfully re-created, will communicate your impressions clearly and forcefully to your audience.

Perhaps you won't paint a masterpiece the first time you try doing a landscape. But you'll have fun. And you'll be thrilled to discover how much richer and more interesting the world is than you had imagined. Most of us have never really observed carefully the things we look at casually. Landscape painting will open up a new world of light, colors, and forms. You will return with new eyes, and new happiness in your heart.

You may discover a psychological by-product of landscape painting that is worth mentioning. For some mysterious reason the small annoyances of everyday life have a way of falling into the proper perspective in the presence of nature. Statesmen, doctors, lawyers, actors, businessmen, housewives — people in every walk of life — find that brush and canvas, mixed with a little sunshine and fresh air, have a magic ability to solve problems far removed from painting.



## Every region has a character and a mood

North, South, East, West — every part of the country has its own characteristics by which we recognize it. Bear this in mind when you paint regional landscapes. For example, if the setting of your picture is the Midwest, where the land is flat, obviously it would be misleading to show a hilly terrain and a Cape Cod house, both of which are typical of New England.

Every place has its typical moods, too. In the deserts of the Southwest the feeling is all aridity, aloneness, heat. In the Midwest the fertile wheat-covered plains suggest a feeling of golden plenty and spaciousness. These moods vary with different times. New England at summer's height is rich and green, but its wintry mood may be stark and bare or wonderfully vigorous and bright with sunlight sparkling on the snow. Keep mood in mind when you draw a place, and try to capture the feeling of it. You'll find it very helpful to spend some time just studying the

scene before you even pick up your brush or pencil. Look it over thoughtfully. Try to really see and know the characteristic shapes, forms, colors and textures that make this spot or area unique and interesting. Are the trees thick or sparse? Is the ground flat, rolling or hilly? What colors seem to dominate the scene. Ask yourself questions like this *before* you begin to paint.

Sometimes you may wish to paint a landscape which you have remembered or even one which you haven't actually seen. Naturally you cannot expect to remember a place or a region accurately, or express convincingly the common features or moods of an area you have never visited. You can, however, keep your eyes and ears open and store away all the information possible about the characteristics of various areas. There are good sources for information, too — photos, books, movies, television, etc. Keep them in mind and use them all.



A northern pine wood has an upward-thrusting, spirelike pattern. The mood is one of alertness and vitality.



By contrast, the hanging growth of a swamp forest in the Deep South creates a feeling of stagnation and gloom.



The craggy, rock-lined shore of Maine has a stark quality. Everything is bleak and bare.



The coastline of a sandy tropical island is soft and undulating. A feeling of warmth and ease prevails.



A midwestern farm, with its vast fields of waving grain and flat horizon, suggests sunlight and the bounty of nature.



A farm set in the rolling hills and tree-covered mountains of New England has a rugged mood and character.



## Make your landscape elements specific

A tree in a landscape is not just a tree, a house is not just a house. Every tree, house, or other landscape element has its own particular characteristics. You must know these characteristics and draw them to create an effective and convincing picture.

An apple tree has more than apples — it has a somewhat stunted trunk and twisted branches. The red cedar has a slender form that slopes steeply upward, but the outline of the hemlock is

wide and irregular. Every style of architecture, too — modern, Colonial, Victorian, etc. — has its own special characteristics that the artist should study and understand.

Never put in just “some kind” of tree or building simply to fill the picture space. Generalities only weaken the scene. You must have the curiosity to find out the specific character of your landscape elements if you want to attract the viewer’s interest.



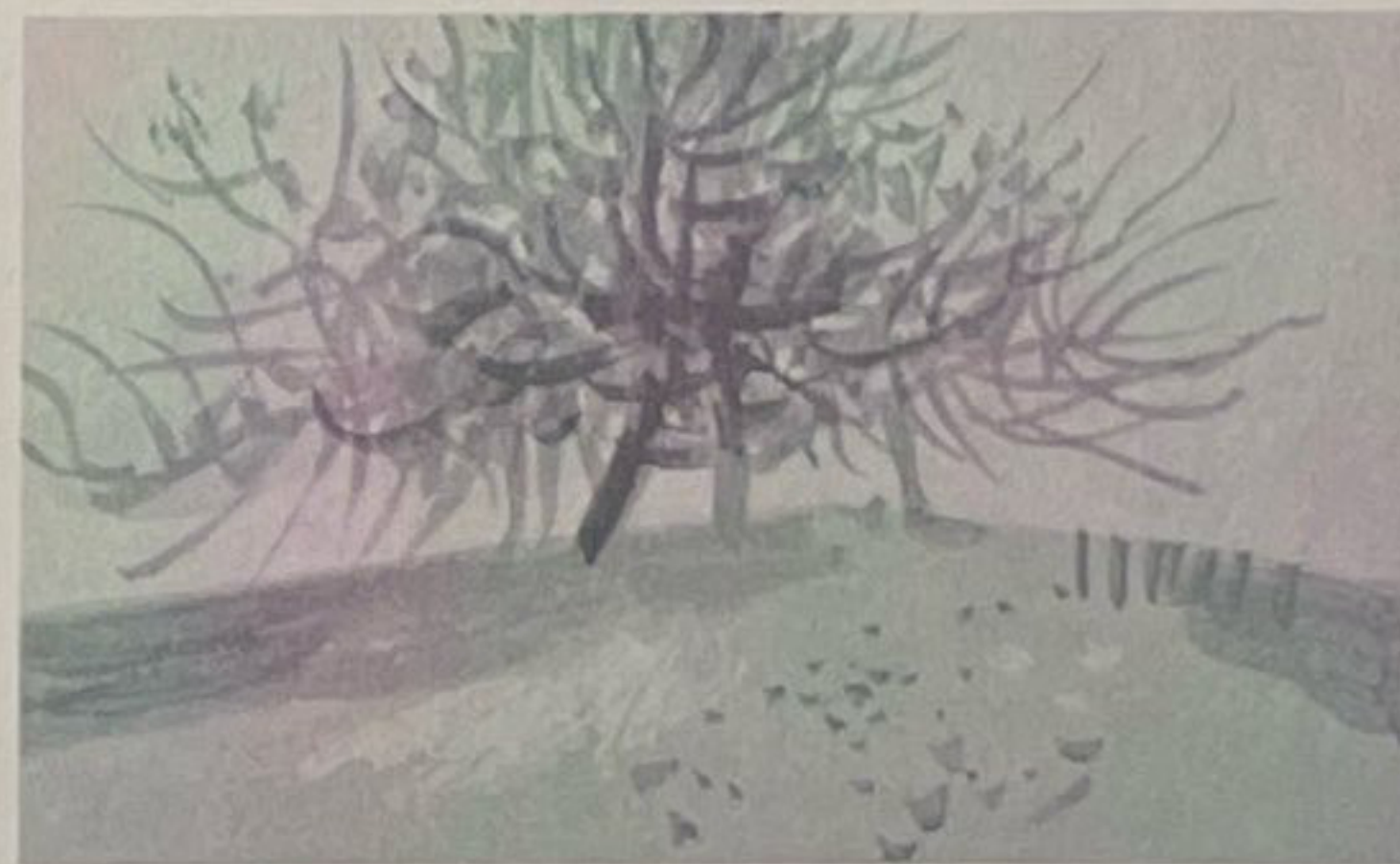
## Numbers and shapes

The characteristic shape or silhouette of objects like trees or houses always asserts itself even when we group many objects of the same kind together. The group tends to take on the character of a larger version of the single object. The thing which has

a pattern that is basically a filigree remains that way; the rectangular, hard-edged form retains its blocky character even in groups. Keep this in mind when you go from the single object to groups of the same object.



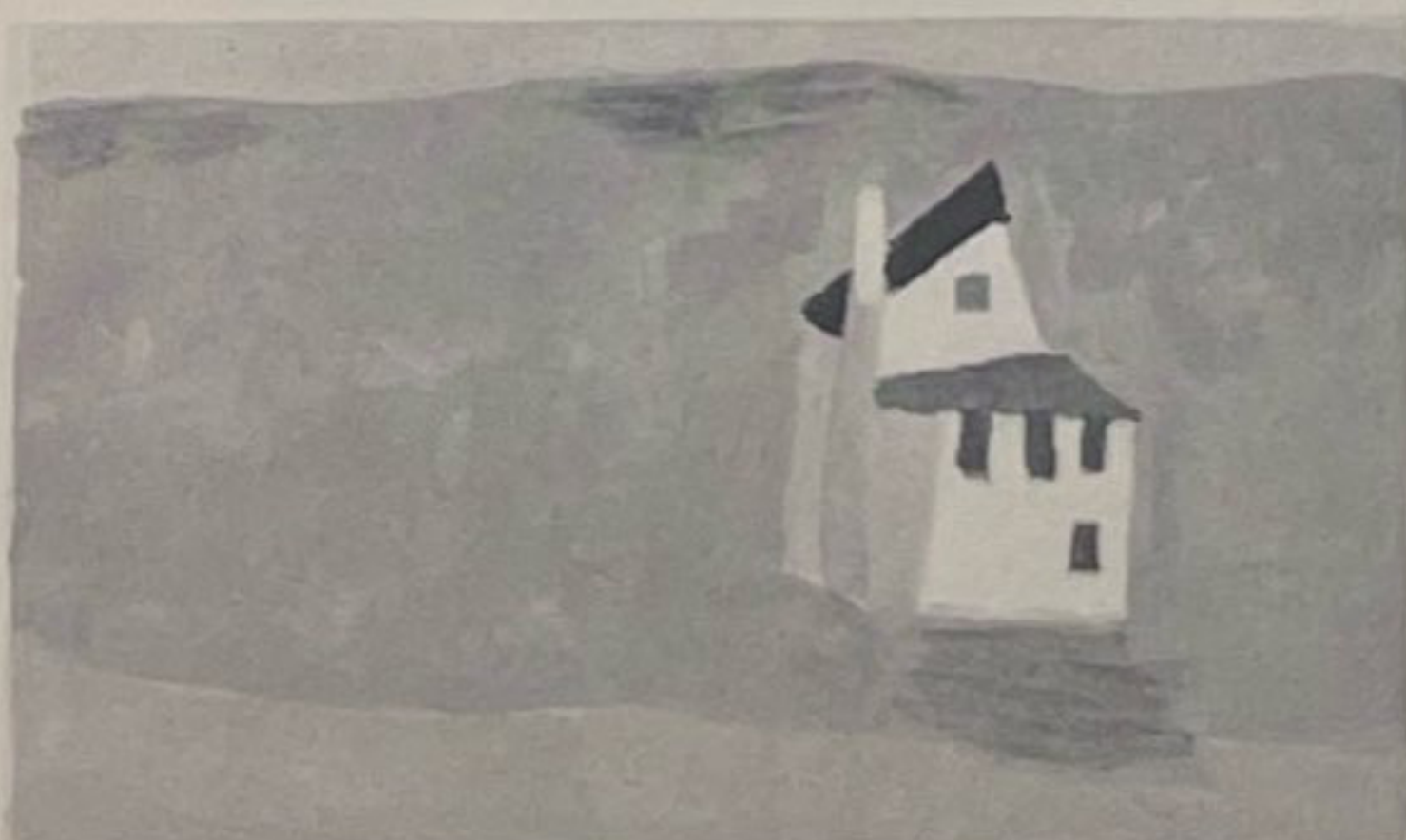
The apple tree has branches which twist and sprawl to form an irregular, soft-edged, horizontal shape.



Two or three apple trees create the same basic shape. More branches simply make the tone more solid.



A whole apple orchard — but notice that its over-all character is quite like that of the single tree.



The house stands out as a geometric, man-made form. Wall, roof, and window shapes are basically rectangular. Now let's add a few more houses to this one.



Added buildings enlarge and repeat the rectangular shape of the single house. Their regular forms contrast sharply with nature's irregularity.



If we view a whole town, this geometric quality becomes stronger and more insistent. The basic feeling of regular, angular forms persists.



## Keep your eyes open

Before you begin to paint a landscape, study the *specific* character of the scene. In painting, generalizations are dull and inaccurate — avoid them. Keep your eyes open and observe the interesting differences in landscape elements such as clouds, land, trees, streams, etc. Here we suggest a few of these differences.

Mountains exist in more than one shape. The character of the Smokies, for example, is different from that of the Rocky Mountains. If you're painting a scene in one of these places, don't show the kind of mountains that are found in the other. Or suppose that you want to create a wild woodland scene. Carefully study and observe the exact character of the woods. If you generalize

your trees, they may look as though they're in a neat, trim country estate or a city park rather than a natural woodland setting. Be just as careful with the man-made forms in your landscape. Pay particular attention to the size and proportions of buildings, roads, bridges, fences and other structures. See that they relate correctly to each other and to the natural landscape around them.

Never neglect an opportunity to observe the character of landscape elements wherever you go. See what distinguishes one kind of river, seashore, or city street from others in different places. You can accumulate a great amount of valuable knowledge by careful observation for use in future pictures.



**Mountains**

Mountains differ markedly in their character. Some, as in the western scene at the left, are angular and jagged, and individual peaks may rise to great heights. Others — you see some in the eastern scene at the right — have forms that are more rolling and hilly. Notice that there is also a difference in the character of the trees in these two contrasting landscapes.



**Trees**

These two pictures contain the same basic elements, but one is very definitely a park and the other a scene along a country road. Notice the difference in the trees in the two pictures. The park trees are cared for by man, whose attentions greatly affect their form and character. Where the trees have been left alone their growth may be unbalanced — some branches successfully reach sunlight, others stay in the shade and are stunted or dead. The park grass, kept smooth and even, is completely different from the weed-choked, knee-high growth that spreads uncontrolled through the brush and wood.



**Rivers**

Rivers and streams are among nature's most varied and interesting forms. Huge, slow-moving rivers like the Mississippi (*left*), so wide that the distant shore is only dimly seen, are one thing — a rushing trout stream so narrow it can be covered by a fisherman's cast is quite another. Quite opposite, too, are the moods of the lazy river that steamers ply and the stream where the water twists and tumbles rapidly along.





## Select the characteristic elements in the landscape

Here is a photograph of a countryside in the South. Let's assume that you want to use this view as the basis for a landscape painting which is typically southern in mood or character. Some of these landscape elements are hardly characteristic of the region. You would have to avoid these elements and select others that are more appropriate for your purpose.

Every time that you set up your easel before a landscape, ask yourself: What things should I select and emphasize because they are typical of the character or mood I want? What should be left out or subordinated because it is inappropriate? Only by selecting really appropriate elements can you be sure that the painting will tell the viewer what you want it to.



These sections could be found in many other parts of the country—in New England or the Midwest, for example. They are not untypical, but they are not typical enough.



This particular area of the picture has the feeling we associate with the South. The willow, with its heavy, hanging foliage hiding most of the house, is a typical feature, and so is the high porch. Here we have something that can be used to create a convincing southern scene.



## Finding the key to interest

**R.F.** (Robert Fawcett)

The pictures on these two pages were made to show you that a landscape which looks incredibly dull may actually contain certain key elements that can form the basis of a good picture.

Although you would normally choose an interesting, attractive subject for your painting you may sometimes want to create a picture of a specific place that is important to you but does not have much obvious visual interest.

I have found that there is no such thing as a setting without the possibilities of interest. It does not matter how dull it seems

— the material is there if one has the desire to see it.

These four pictures demonstrate the point. Sometimes the answer is to *exaggerate* forms, lines, patterns, or textures. Sometimes it is to *simplify* them. At other times *change* of size and position contributes most. But in every case it means making *what is there work* rather than introducing *new* items.

Try all of these approaches. Design and organize, play one pattern against another. Enough of this practice will bring you to the eventual goal — complete control of your picture.



At first glance this photo seems hopeless — a confused maze of indistinct shapes. Looking closely, however, we can make out an interesting variety of forms: at the left, the pine with its spreading branches, the graceful arching group of thin trees next to it, the white birches in the middle, the strong pattern of shapes at the right, and the pattern of shadows on the snow.

In the picture at the right I have picked these elements out of the confusion and played them against each other to form strong, interesting contrasts. The treatment is simple and diagrammatic to make the point. In a more finished picture, I would make very sure that the details did not destroy these elements. Note the change in the proportions of the picture — now the essentially vertical trees no longer form a narrow horizontal band, and the empty area of snow takes up less of the picture space.



Though this photo is more interesting than the last, the composition is still somewhat haphazard. We must develop the underlying structure — emphasize the shapes, rhythms, and textures — if we are to paint a picture and not copy a photograph.

Before going to work, I asked myself some questions: Can I see distinct shapes in the light and shadow areas on the trees? Are some things falling out of the picture (here, for instance, the telephone pole)? Are some areas of foliage solid, others delicately filigreed? What is the basic pattern of lines created by the limbs? I asked other questions, too.

At the right you see my answers. The picture has been made vertical to suit the upright tree forms. The streaks of light curving on the bank have been modified into a clear, exciting pattern. Branches and foliage are organized into designed areas of texture. Everything — shapes, textures, positions, sizes — has been made more definite.







Another photo that is less than exciting — how can we base a picture on it? First we shear away some of the waste foreground and blank sky. The trees are interesting, so we enlarge them. In those at the left the curved shapes of the foliage have a certain gracefulness — we make more of this, and play the rhythmic pattern of curves against the straight, rigid shoreline and the massive tree forms at the right. Some clouds are added to give the sky character, and we reduce the trees, grass, water, and reflections to their basic shapes by omitting confusing details. With nothing fuzzy any more, a picture begins to emerge.



This snapshot has all the elements we need for a good picture, but they cry out for rearranging. Let's organize the piles better — now they frame the boat, our center of interest. To make it really stand out, we cut down on the water, enlarge the sky, and raise the sail. Texture, added throughout, gives life and movement. In the foreground the beam shoots disturbingly out of the bottom — but, straightened, it echoes the rhythm of the shoreline.



## Selecting and organizing the view

On the preceding pages Robert Fawcett demonstrated how you could redesign nature's landscape without making radical changes — working almost wholly with the scene before you. Here we show some additional points to keep in mind when you compose a landscape.

Almost always, when you work from nature, you are faced with the problem of selecting from an almost infinite number of landscape elements that stretch from one end of the horizon to the other. It is a mistake to assume that you are forced to select a limited view from this vista — that you must focus only

on an area similar in shape to the limits of your picture space. Actually, you have complete freedom to move trees, buildings, hills, anything — to the left or right as well as back or forth.

For example, most of the elements you want might already be grouped together quite interestingly but there might also be, far off to one side or way back in the distance, just the building or tree you need for your composition. If so, don't hesitate to move this form right to the spot where it will do the most good. Remember, the people who see your picture do not care how you arrived at it — they simply want it to be interesting.



The photo above represents the wide expanse you see when you look at a landscape. In composing this scene into a picture, you extract from the whole vista the most interesting elements and group them pleasingly together, as in the accompanying sketch.



There is no need to show the landscape elements the same size you find them in nature. Don't hesitate to enlarge a tree or building to make it appear closer, or reduce the size of other elements to make them seem to recede. Note that, in proceeding from photo to sketch, the artist has moved the barn across the road to "stop" the strong movement of the lines of the road and the mass of trees and brush which converge toward the left.





## Using the view



It's important to be aware of the many different ways that you can interpret the same landscape. You can shift the forms, change the lighting and alter the tones. You can add or subtract figures or objects. But whatever you do, always adhere to the basic principles of composition and design. On this page we show you six different composition sketches using the same landscape elements — a barn, silo and subsidiary buildings. These sketches have been worked out without altering the view of the buildings. We have simply altered their size and position in the composition and added one other dominating form.



In our previous sketch the farmer was the dominant form. In this composition the tree and the fence have the optical emphasis, and the barn is slightly larger than before. The addition of the tree and the fence has greatly altered the feeling of the scene. You cannot expect a scene to remain the same, if you change surrounding shapes and tones. It can be improved or injured, depending entirely on how well you interpret the feeling you wish it to have.



By making the buildings smaller and placing them further back and to the right, with no trees in the scene, an entirely different locality is suggested. This is helped by the addition of the tractor and the flatness of the ground. The tractor is the dominant form, both in size, tone and position. In this arrangement the horizontal lines and shapes dominate. From a standpoint of composition the figure of the man vertically breaks the simplicity of the large sky area.



Although only part of the truck and barn show in the picture, this is enough to make them quickly recognizable. Our knowledge and imagination fill in the parts which don't show. Notice that the dark accents are carefully placed for interest and balance.



Here there is no question as to the dominant form. Study how the darks and the shadows on the figure are placed toward the center of the composition. If the figure were lighted from its right, the darks would have fallen too far to the right and would have overbalanced the arrangement. These are the things that must be considered to achieve good design of tone areas. Only parts of the buildings appear, but enough is shown to quickly relate the figure to the locale.



The fields and the mountains and the bigness of the scene dominate this view. Notice how field, mountain and sky establish three distinct areas in composition. The fence posts, road, truck, buildings, trees and clouds are but incidentals in the total arrangement, and they are only important as details.



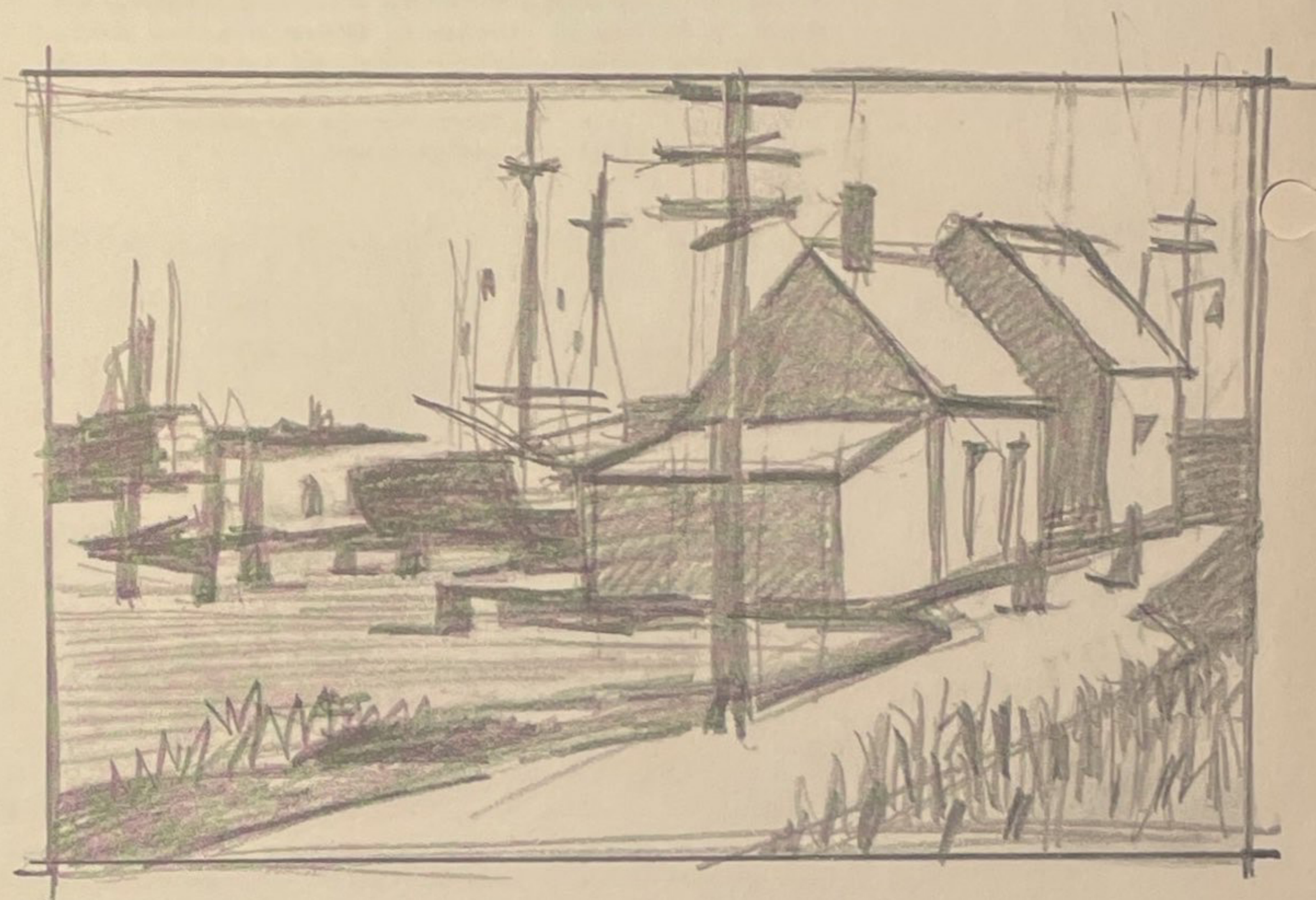
Composition is the art of arranging the various elements at the painter's disposal for the expression of his feelings. In a picture every part will be visible and will play the role conferred upon it, be it principal or secondary. All that is not useful in a picture is detrimental.

HENRI MATISSE



On this and the following page Dong Kingman has explored a few of the compositional possibilities of two landscape subjects. These are the kind of studies you should make before you begin any painting.

In his sketches Kingman has shifted some of the forms around and eliminated others in order to see what changing emphasis would do to the subject. He also tried a variety of value schemes to create different moods. Study these pages carefully and try to approach your own compositions with the same willingness to change and adapt the subject until it expresses your own individual way of seeing and interpreting nature.





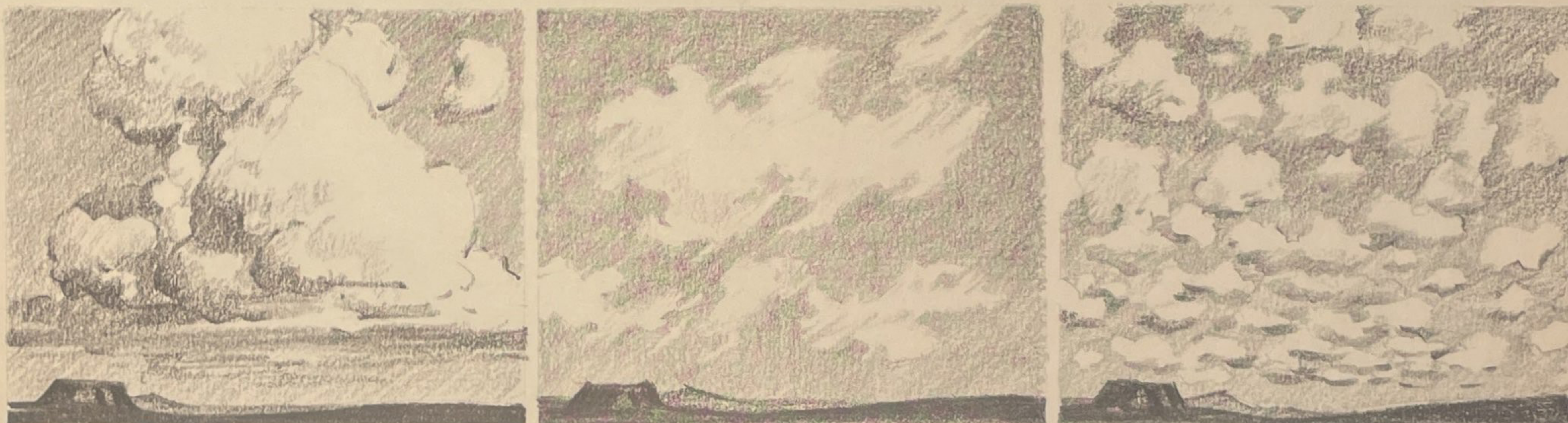
## Time and the elements

The pictures on the opposite page are intended to remind you that landscape is not something fixed and unchanging. Although it has a basic character, it is subject to wind, weather, and time. In the stealthy light of dawn, the bright glare of noon, and the sunset that flames up and slowly dies, the landscape takes on different aspects and moods. It changes with the seasons, too.

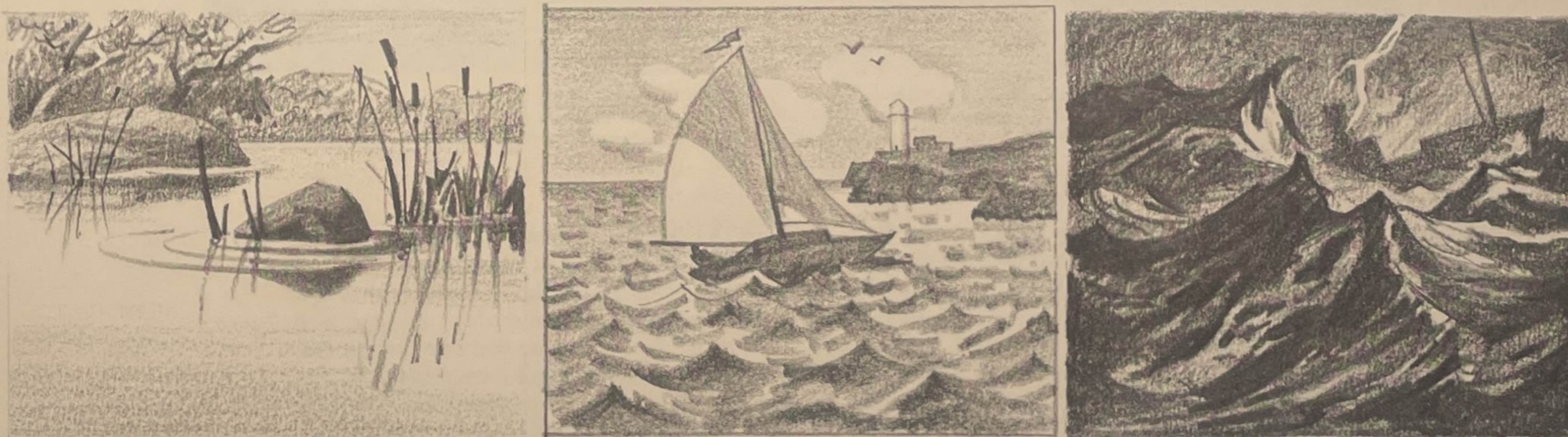
Time and the elements are valuable tools for any artist. By using them adroitly, you can give your landscapes much more meaning. A storm in the background can underline the stormy temperament of the figure in the foreground or strengthen the excitement of a dramatic action. Sunlight can fill a landscape with brightness and gaiety, just as darkness can shroud it in gloom.

**The changing forms of nature.** Nature is always changing, always different — and nowhere more than in clouds and water. In a picture their specific forms not only help reveal the weather of a scene — they also offer the artist shapes and textures he can use to make his compositions more effective.

Pay particular attention to the clouds, water, and other landscape elements that show the effects of time and the weather. When you use these effects, make sure they are consistent. Never put stormy waves in a picture meant to portray a calm sea. Remember, wind that blows waves will also influence cloud formations, smoke, a boat's sails, and flags. You, and you alone, can train yourself to see, observe, and remember these things.



**Clouds:** In almost every landscape there is a sky — usually one with clouds in it. These may be huge, threatening thunderheads — light, fleecy forms that drift slowly on — or many smaller high clouds that create a texture over large areas. Carefully selected, any one of these or other cloud forms may add conviction to the scene and help the composition.



**Water:** Like clouds, water may vary greatly in appearance. It may be flat and smooth on a calm day, choppy with whitecaps when there is a brisk wind blowing, or a storm-swept surface where waves rise to mountainous heights.



## The weather in your landscape

What do different kinds of weather look like? In order to portray the warmth of sunshine, the ghostly feeling of fog, the drama of an impending storm, or the quiet mood of dusk you must know what each of these is really like in visual terms.

Your own firsthand observation counts most in learning to paint weather. You don't have to travel far to observe it — it's

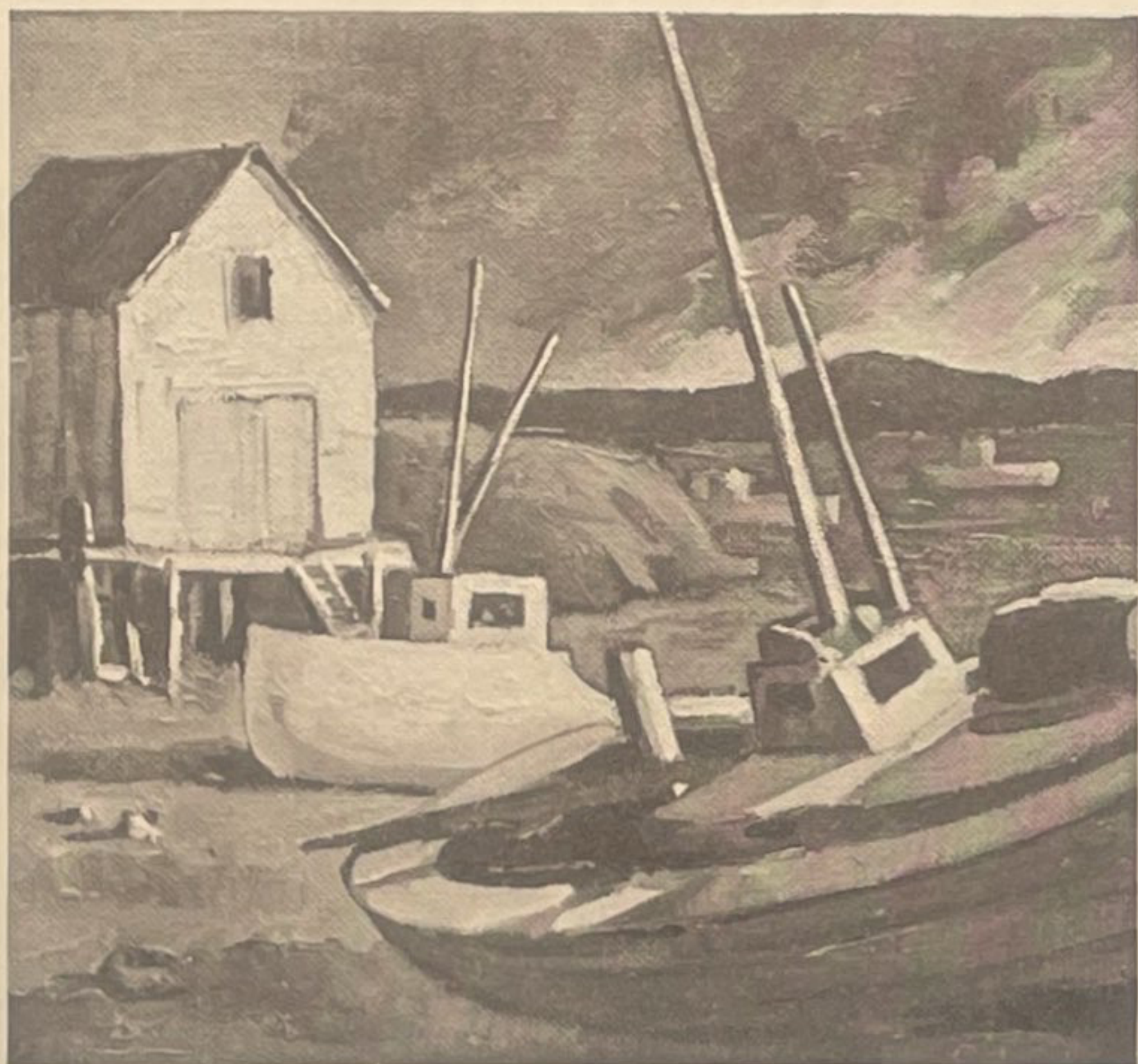
all around you. Study the weather as if you were ready to paint it — note the shapes, values, and edges of objects and how different they appear under different conditions. The examples below point out some of these changing effects. Compare these examples carefully, and learn all you can from them. Weather is important — there will be some in every landscape you paint.



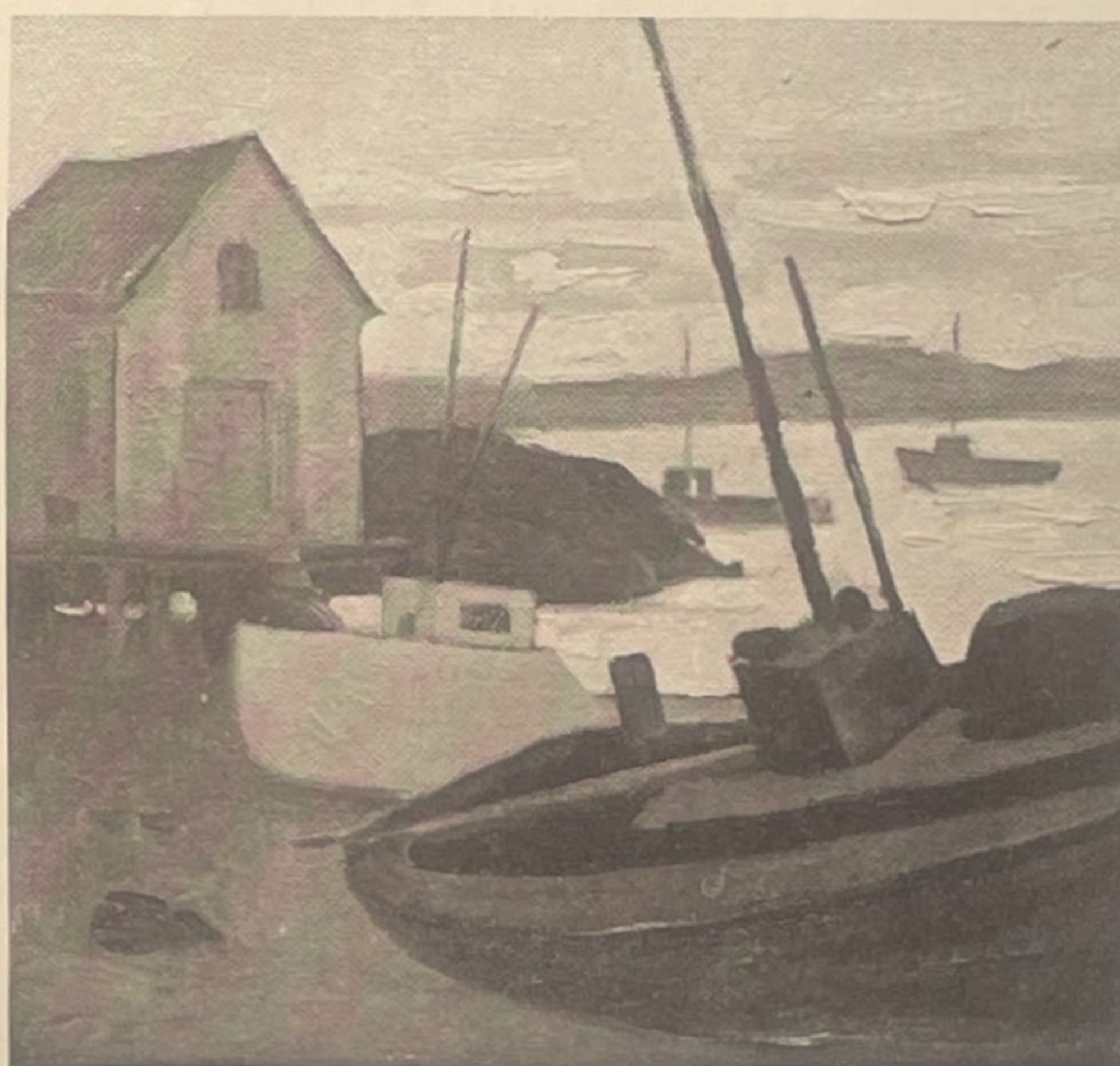
In a sunny scene the planes which face the overhead sun are bright and sharp. The shadows are definite but are filled with light thrown back into them from the sunlit surfaces. The whole scene is high in key.



When fog envelops the landscape, soft, diffused edges predominate. The tones of all but the nearest objects are close together in a very high key. In painting this effect of fog it is important to put in no more than you see.



A sudden storm that moves in during a sunny day has its own dramatic pattern. The sunstruck objects stand out in sharp contrast to the dark sky and the distant shore and water that are under the shadow of the clouds.



At twilight the values of objects both near and far begin to merge, and the sharp contrasts of daylight are gone. The forms tend to appear flatter in this light and to silhouette against sky and water.

## Time of day

Each day you have an opportunity to see the characteristic appearance of morning, noon, and night. The overhead sun of noon casts short shadows and strong light on planes that face the sky. Early morning or late afternoon shadows are long, with the strongest lights on the vertical planes that face the low sun, while the roof planes are relatively darker than at noon. Against the sky of early evening, the forms merge into a flat silhouette.



Noon

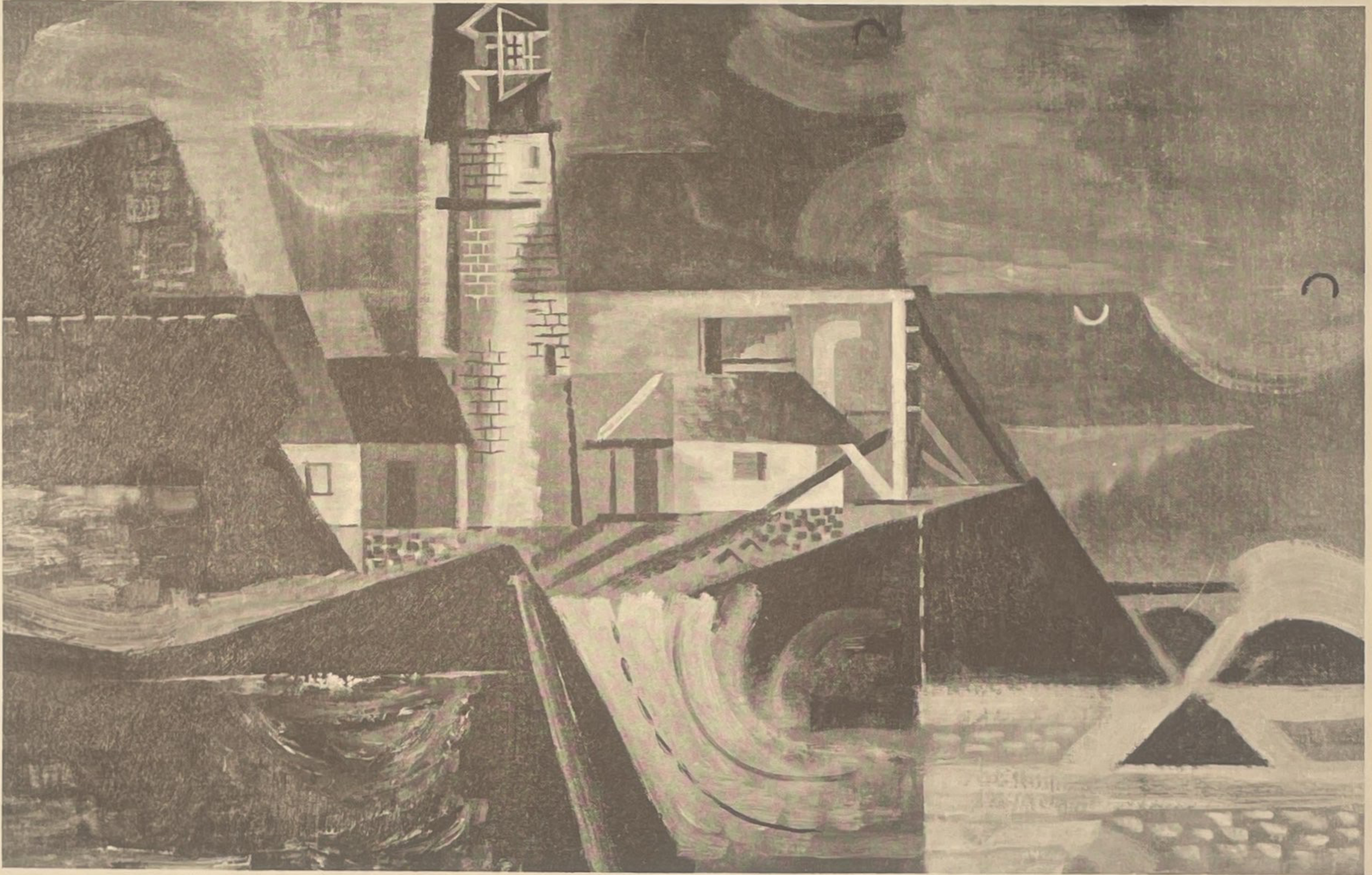


Early morning or late afternoon



Dusk





## 2. Decorative Abstraction: pleasing arrangements of geometrically flat shapes

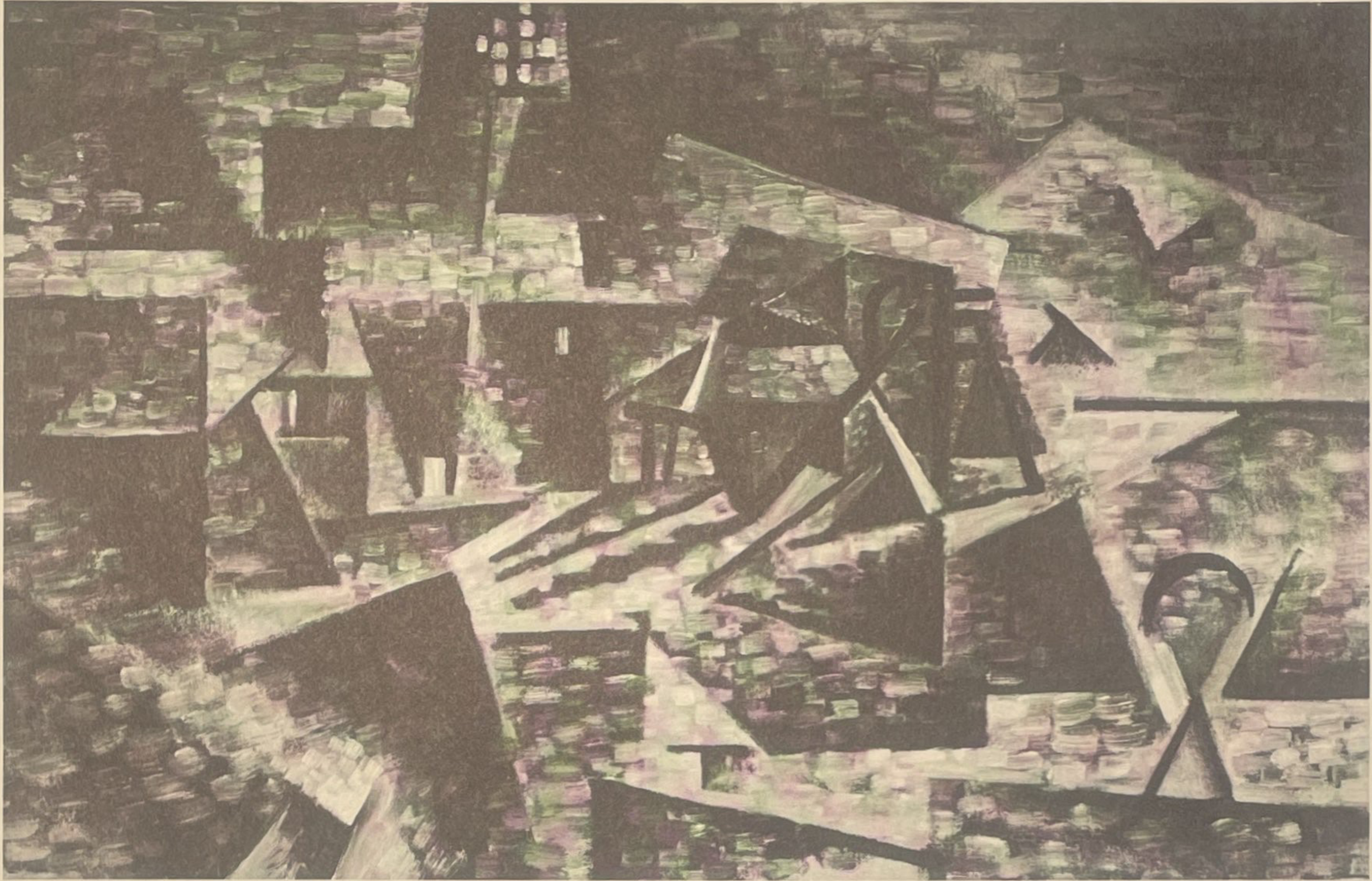
Certain mannerisms stemming from abstract styles, especially Cubism, have appealed to those painters whose inclinations are toward decorative design. In applying this approach to the lighthouse subject, the areas of both rocks and buildings were first drastically simplified and flattened into planes. Where a more varied distribution of tone was required for design interest, other shapes were introduced arbitrarily, often as extensions of edges seen in adjoining forms. In the same way the down-curving shape of the cloud mass at the right was made to conform, in reverse, to the rounded shapes in the rocks immediately beneath. The half-circle motifs, into which the birds had now been compressed, repeat this rhythm in an all-over pattern effect.

Slight recessions were suggested by overlappings and changes in tone, but wherever there were movements tending to lead into the depth, they were blocked by other lines and planes returning interest to the surface. The openness of the planes, an effect obtained through soft, textured brushwork on certain sides, permitted the eye to circulate freely through the design.

The lines which signify the stones of the lighthouse were treated as stylized patterns of white and black alternating over blocks of tone, just as the white dashes were used to indicate the texture and vibrancy of water, without conveying its actual density.

In the final stage, since the plot of rectangular, interlocking planes still seemed too static, it was relieved by giving a more pronounced emphasis to the diagonal silhouettes of rocks and also by the addition of black and white lines of varying widths to parts of the building.





### **3. Analytical Cubism: structure and rhythm underlying appearances**

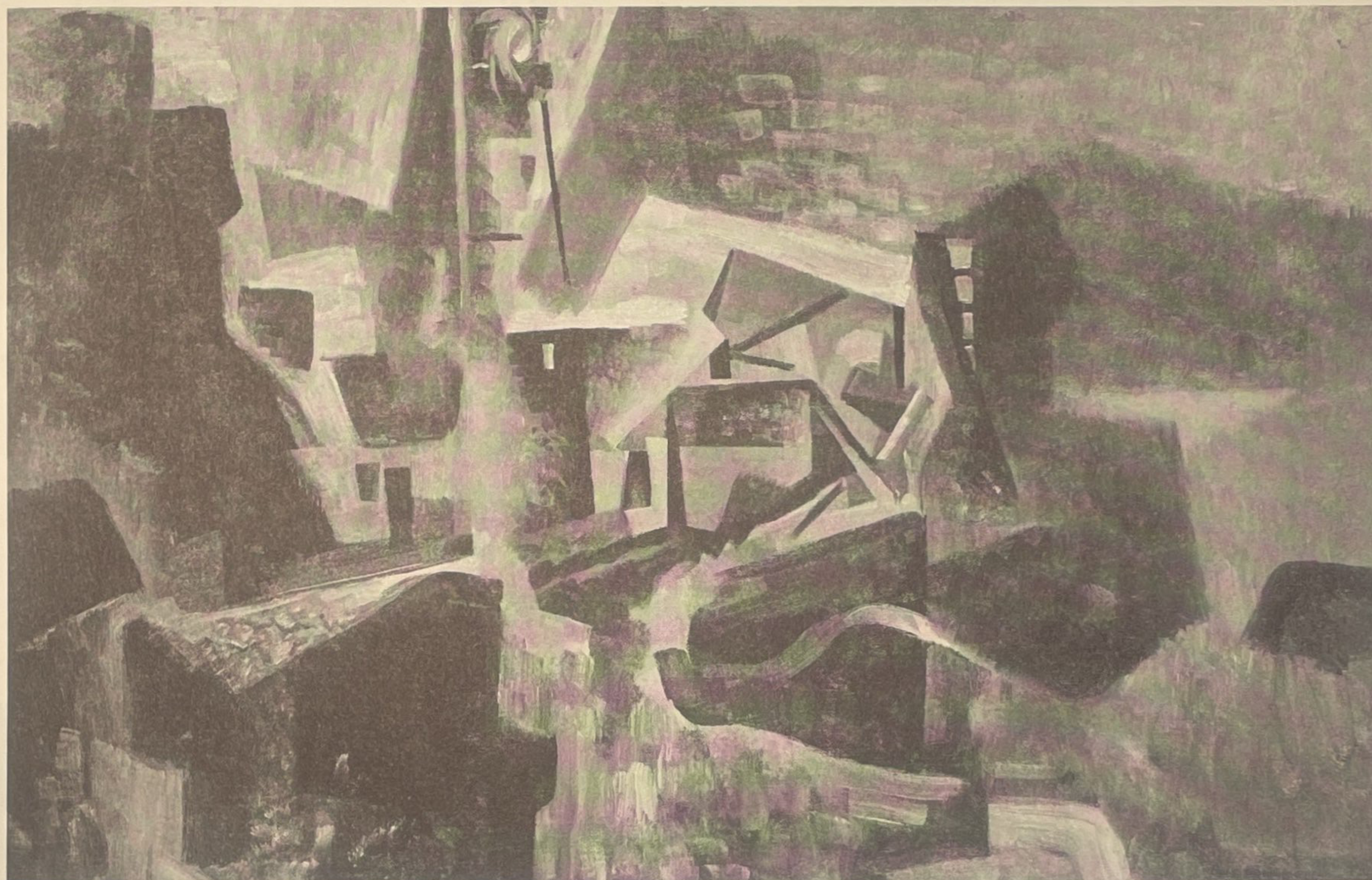
In undertaking a painting like this one, in the style of Analytical Cubism, the artist turns his attention away from the specific appearance of his subject — its aspect at any particular time of day, weather or season, its characteristic of local color and distinguishing surfaces. He sets out, instead, to express a rhythm of volumes that he senses in the various oppositions and continuities of forms presented by the scene. The ability to respond to what is seen in terms of such underlying forces usually develops only after years of working from nature, so that essential structural elements are recognized and can be freely employed in the composition. Accumulated experience teaches the artist to grasp basic orderly relationships in even the most apparently disorganized or cluttered scene.

The first step in approaching the lighthouse subject from this Cubist point of view was to strip away all particular, descriptive details, and reduce forms to their essentials. The surfaces of the water, rocks, clouds and sky were thought of as things occupying space in a certain way — as flat, tilting or upright planes — rather than as areas having the distinct qualities of wetness, hardness and fleeciness, respectively. All parts of the picture were represented in terms of the qualities they shared — especially their structure and positions in space.

The large planes of the rocks were broken down into smaller planes so that the individual parts of the mass were given just as much definition as the large silhouettes. In the same way the shaft of the lighthouse tower was broken by planes extended from adjoining structures and from the sky. These were further broken down by the application of paint in chisel-edged strokes which arbitrarily alternated between lighter and darker values.

Throughout the painting process, the surface of the canvas had been developed simultaneously in all parts. No one shape could be carried to completion before its neighbors, since each plane depended on adjoining shapes for its definition. When the picture was finished each plane contributed equally to the over-all movement and tension.





#### **4. Abstract Expressionism: projection of emotion in dynamic shapes**

This fourth picture was undertaken to demonstrate that partially abstracted forms can be used for an emotional expression. The very freedom, in fact, with which the artist can break down and then rebuild forms in fluid relationships allows him to project his feelings intensely into the elements of the subject.

Although the initial stages of simplifying and flattening forms followed the similar steps taken in version 3, the shapes emerging were altered so as to stress the most dramatic qualities of the scene. Replacing the vertical and horizontal structures that had contributed stabilizing relationships to the preceding versions, were diagonally tilted planes, which thrust out with almost explosive force from a center approximately at the base of the tower. The lightest values, which in the previous compositions had been distributed rather evenly throughout the picture, were concentrated into one main radiating shape, extending from foreground to background, against which most solid or positive, forms were brilliantly defined.

A new importance was given to the breakers, entering the picture with a strong leftward and up-thrusting movement, and accentuated by being forced between the pincer-like silhouettes of the black, rock-masses on either side.

In the wave, the brush was used in alternately slashing and broken strokes to create both its forward rushing motion and a pulsating quality. In areas like water and sky a soft, "scrubby" texture conveyed a different kind of agitation.

Although it is true that the dramatic effect achieved in this picture was obtained by exaggerating shapes and tones seen in the original, the result is consistent with the deep emotions associated with the tempestuous meeting of earth and sea in such a locale. The lights and darks, flowing in and out in tumultuous rhythms, reflect the ebb and flow of the tides, and beyond that the ebb and flow of life itself.



Kraushaar Galleries

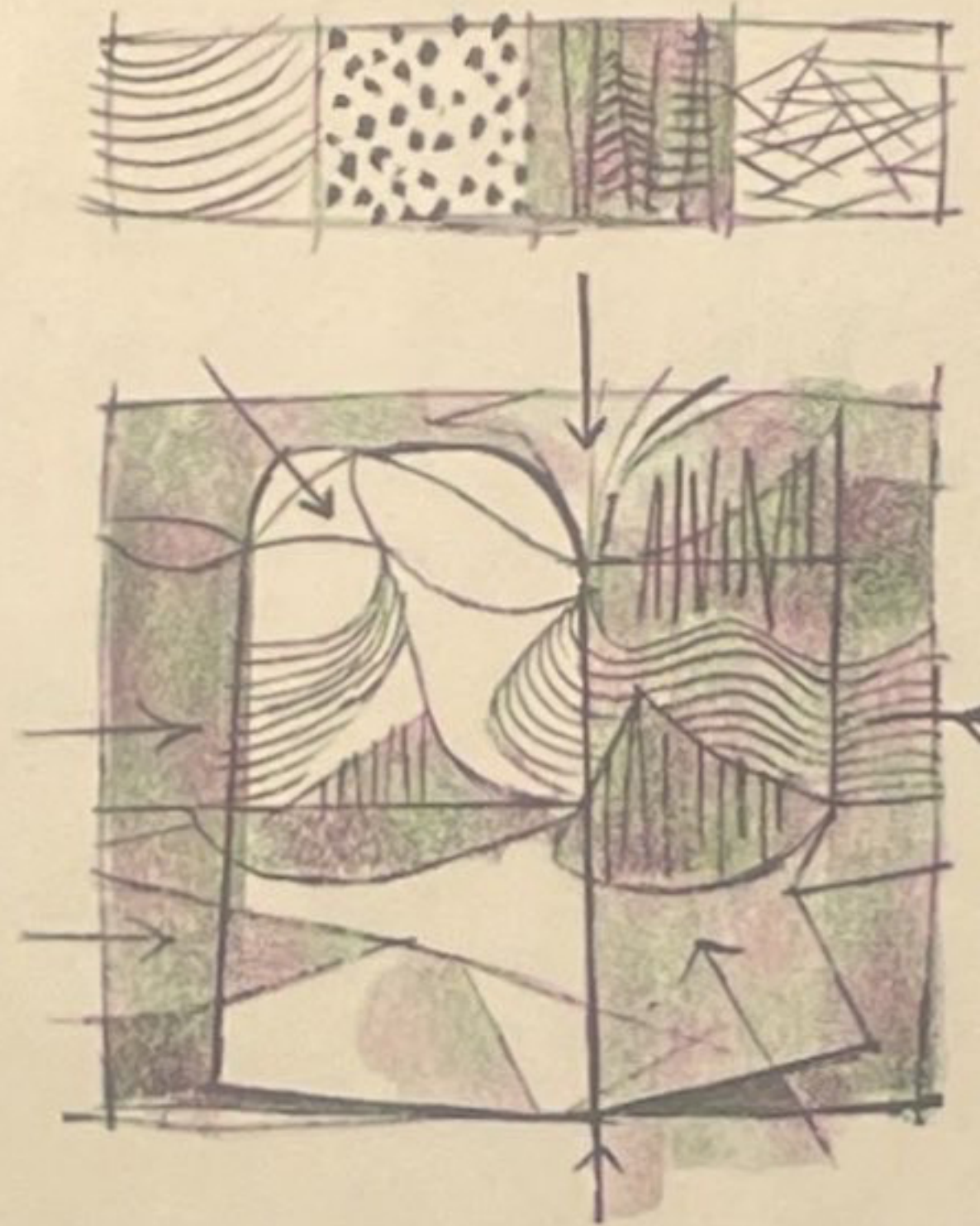


**BOARDMAN ROBINSON.**  
**Colorado Landscape**

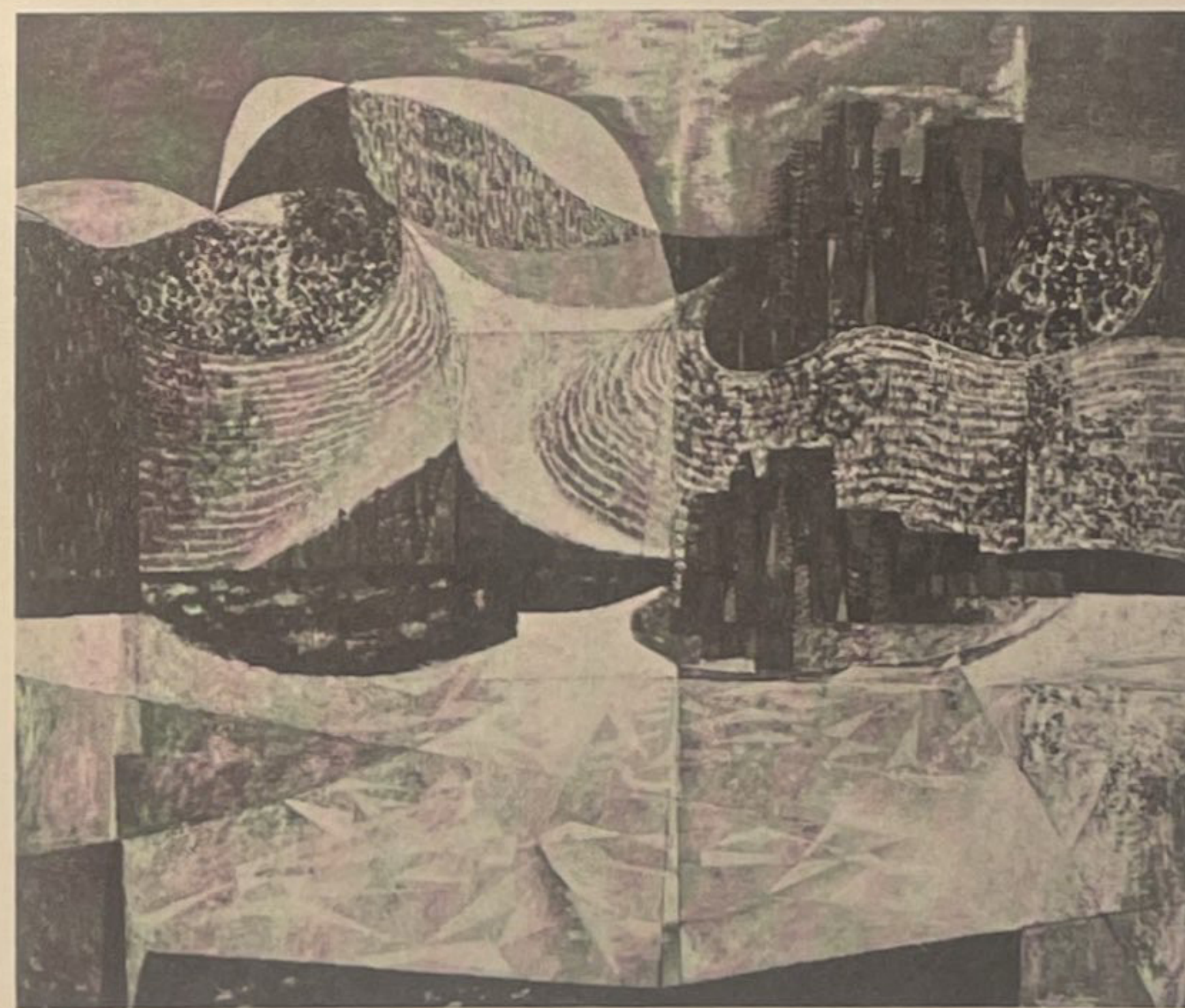
The massive bulk and power of these rock formations caught the artist's imagination, and he did everything possible to emphasize their monumental strength. The cliffs are presented as chunky, irregular shafts; this angular design is echoed in the clouds. All accidental detail has been eliminated, even in the foreground. Here flowing spherical patterns contrast with the broken rhythms of the cliffs. In keeping with the monumentality of the theme, the brushwork is vigorous. The whole painting has tremendous masculine impact.

**JOHN ATHERTON. Winter Hudson**

Each artist sees nature in his own way. John Atherton studied nature for suggestions of texture and design. In this painting inspired by qualities of the Hudson River landscape, textural patterns derived from trees, fields and ice have been distributed in a delicately lyrical, essentially abstract arrangement. Four of these textures are pointed out in the squares above the diagram.



F. M. Hall Collection, University of Nebraska



**MARSDEN HARTLEY.**  
**Mt. Katahdin, Autumn, No. 1**

Here nature has been reduced to basic shapes, which were then arranged in a careful pattern and rendered in broad areas of color. Despite the compact, almost classic purity of this design, there is considerable emotional content and a strong quality of lyricism.



HOBBE  
The Watermill  
The Louvre



Hobbema conveyed the charming picturesqueness of the scene in his *The Watermill* largely through values — a massing of darks against lights, each penetrating the other with soft and irregular silhouettes. Within these large foliage and green areas details are preserved with exquisite delicacy in some parts, suppressed in muted tones in others. The tonal scheme was not accidental but developed in planned stages that included first a line drawing, then modeling in neutral tones. Color, playing a less important role, was added last in transparent glazes of greens and warm browns.

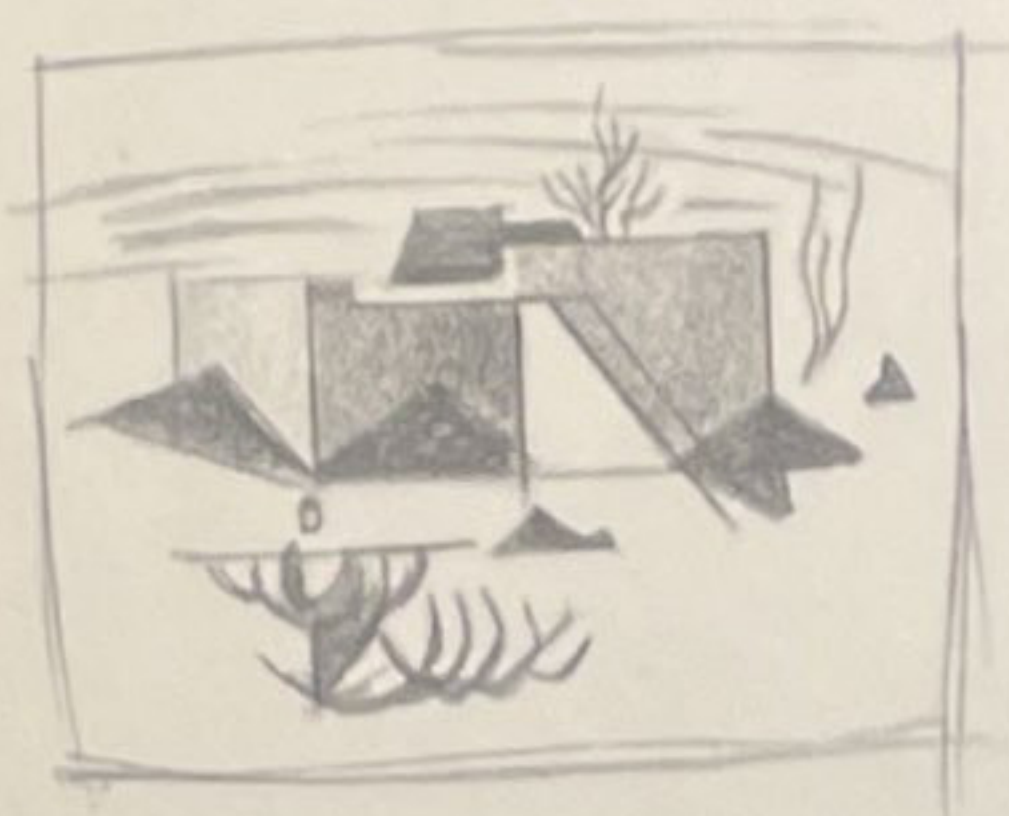


Downtown Galleries



**JULIAN LEVI. Beachcomber**

Landscape can be given strong emotional meaning, if the artist wishes. Here the massive concrete foundation, rendered still more imposing by contrast with the distant house, has obviously lost its battle with nature. So also have the boat in the foreground (of which the ribs alone remain), the distant trees, and, by implication, the man as well. The formality of the stolid frontal pose suggests not pure realism, but emotional symbolism as well.



**REMBRANDT. Winter Landscape**

Though painted in the studio, this little landscape sparkles with freshness and spontaneity. There is almost no detail, but the imagination of the observer supplies it. To keep the composition clear and uncluttered the material has been organized within carefully patterned areas. The figure of the little dog, isolated in a pool of light, is a most important touch. He has been drawn so freely that he seems to be in motion.

Cassel Museum



Courtesy of the Trustees, Tate Gallery, London



**MAURICE UTRILLO. Place du Tertre**

This painting may appear to be an exact copy of a typical Paris scene. Actually the artist has designed the material very carefully as a composition of cubes and rectangles. The use of this single dominant motif has given the painting unity; variety is achieved by handling each rectangle differently. The broken roof line succeeds in adding a free, lyrical touch to what could have been a rather four-square composition.

Courtesy Midtown Galleries  
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Hettleman



**WILLIAM THON. The Outpost**

The lighthouse symbolizes man's determined stand in the face of nature. The cylindrical forms of the building rise in a pyramid-like structure of tremendous strength. Rocks and waves repeat the pyramidal motif, and the sky itself reflects this pattern. The artist achieved maximum impact by employing minimum means. The painting is restricted to one color, blue, with warm tones in the whites and three touches of yellow in the light itself.

